Afforestation programmes in Andhra Pradesh

3040. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether financial assistance was provided to Andhra Pradesh for its afforestation programmes during the last four years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise;

(c) whether the forest cover in the State increased during the said period; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Financial assistance provided to Andhra Pradesh for afforestation under four major Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Ministry of Environment & Forests is as under:

S.No.	Year	Rs. in lakhs
1.	1996-97	403.35
2.	1997-98	191.28
3.	1998-99	276.71
4.	1999-2000	358.26

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. According to latest State Forest Report 1999, there has been an increase of 939 sq. Km. in the forest cover in the State.

Establishment of Environment Protection Fund

3041. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are working on establishing any Environment Protection Fund; and

(b) if so, what is the status of the programme?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

(SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The concept of an Environment Protection Fund at the national level is at a nascent stage.

Andhra Pradesh Rivers under NRCP

3042. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) which are the major rivers in Andhra Pradesh included in the National River Conservation Plan, to improve their water quality; and

(b) what is the present status of work done on these rivers?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) River Godavari has been included under the National River Conservation Plan in Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Pollution abatement works in 4 towns namely Bhadrachalam, Mancharial, Rajamundry and Ramagundam have been sanctioned for an amount of Rs. 51.03 crore. A total of 17 schemes have approved so far for an amount of Rs. 18.06 crore out of which 7 schemes have been completed. Central grant amounting to Rs. 12.59 crore have been released so far for implementation of the schemes against which an amount of Rs. 7.68 crore has been spent by the State Government till January, 2001.

Amendments to the Mental Health Act

3043. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the Mental Health Act to provide fundamental rights to the persons suffering from mental disease;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received demand in this regard from NGOs and leading psychiatrist of the country; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) No, Sir.